Hayden Survey circa 1870, encamped on Yellowstone Lake. Photo by Wm. H. Jackson, Utah State Historical Society

Chapter Three

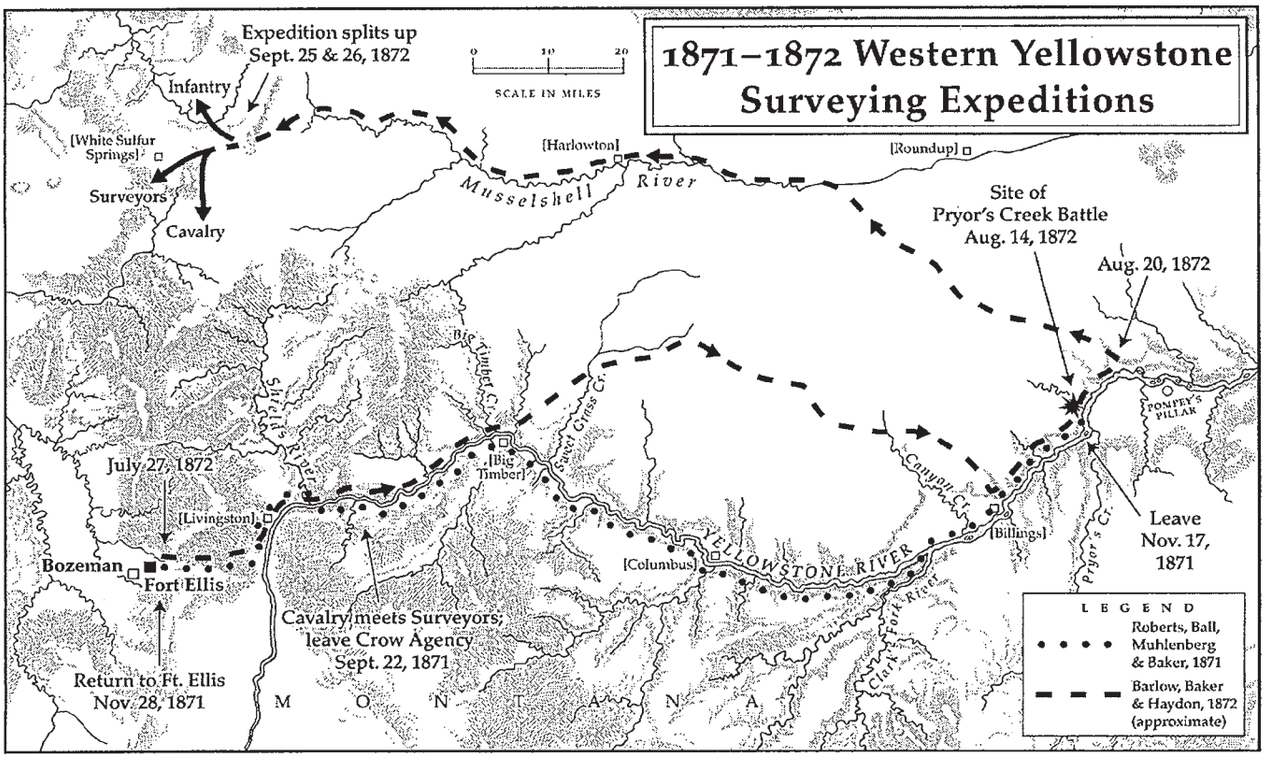
Some came to stay: Matthew McGuirk, James C. McCartney, Henry R. Horr, George Marshall. Langford writes for Scribner's. Hayden's Expeditions are notable. Yellowstone National Park is official. Langford is Superintendent. William Darrah Kelley's suggestion is made. The Northern Pacific builds to Bismarck. The Panic of 1873 shocks all. Jay Cooke is broke.

While some visitors were transient, others were not visitors passing through, but settled within or near what would become the Park boundaries with the intention of remaining. Many were businessmen. Matthew McGuirk, aided by George A. Huston, homesteaded in August 1871 and eventually built a bathhouse and cottage on the Boiling River (earlier called Hot River) near runoff from Mammoth Hot Springs. He advertised his business as McGuirk's Medicinal Springs, saying that the sick would benefit by the waters. He remained in business until after the Park was established, but Superintendent Langford ordered him to leave. In 1889, the army razed his buildings. McGuirk felt he should be reimbursed for his real estate and, finally, in 1899, he received one thousand dollars from the government.

A. Bart Henderson and brother James established ranches near Stephens Creek, a stream flowing into the Yellowstone River near the future settlement of Cinnabar.[22] Bart astounded many locals by skiing from his ranch to Bozeman, a distance of some sixty miles. James Henderson sold his ranch to Clarence Stephens in 1882. One year later, George Huston and Joe Keeney bought the property. C. T. Hobart also owned the ranch for a time; by 1895, however, Hugo Hoppe owned the land.

At about the same time, James C. McCartney and Henry R. Horr claimed 160 acres of land near Liberty Cap at the foot of Clematis Gulch near White Mountain in 1871, and built the first lodgings within what would become the Park. The men

[22] Stephens Creek was renamed Hoppe Creek in 1890.



Map adapted from U.S. War Department maps, 1867& 1876

had similar plans for customers "taking the waters" as did McGuirk and built cabins for recovering invalids. Two years later, Horr gave up his claims at McCartney's and, with his brother, developed coalfields in 1882 north of Gardiner. At the request of some of the women who lived at the settlement called Horr, the name was changed to Electric on January 30, 1904, after the mountain nearby which rises within the northern park boundary.

The mountain, with an elevation of 10,943 feet, received its name in 1872 because of the following incident:

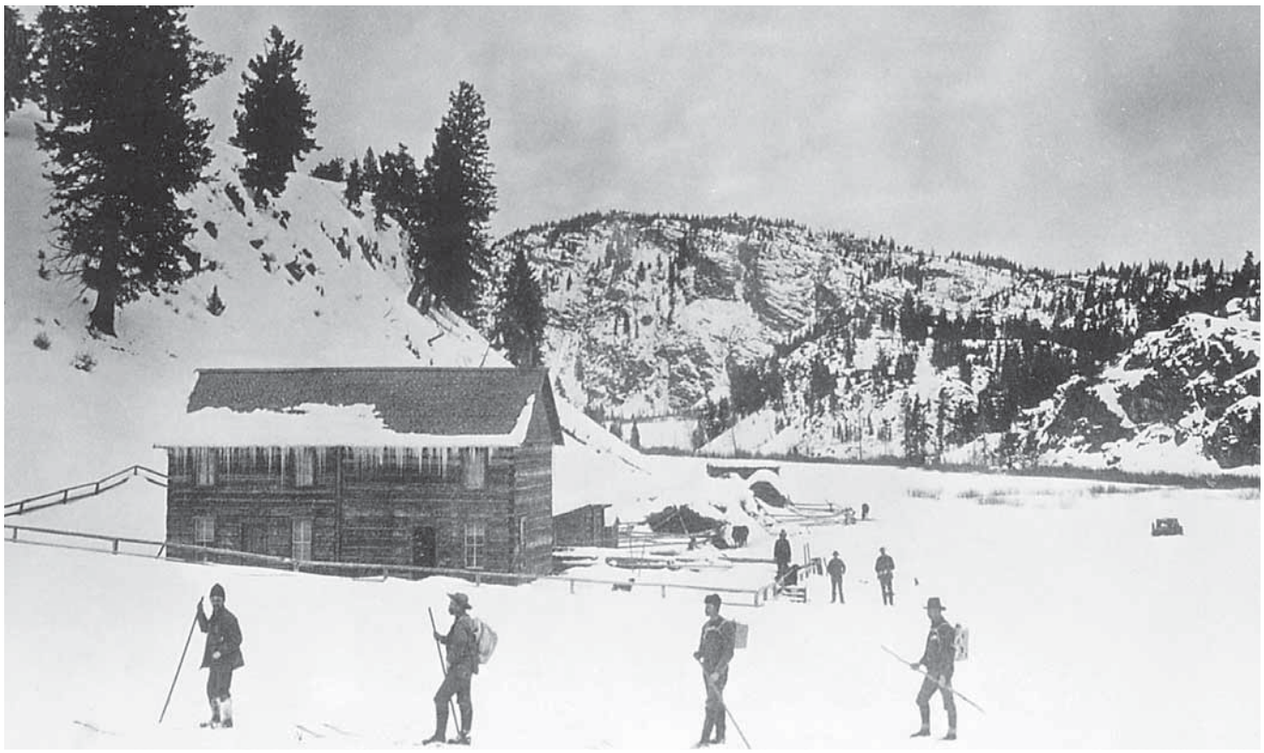
> *July 26, 1872: Mr. Gannett succeeding the highest point and depositing his instruments, when he discovered that he was in the midst of an electrical cloud, and his feelings not being of the most agreeable sort he retreated. As he neared us we observed that his hair was standing on end, as though he were in an electrical stool, and we could hear a series of snapping sounds, as though he were receiving the charges of a number of electrical friction machines...*[23]

[23] United States Geological Survey of the Territories

The post office at the town of Electric remained open until April 30, 1915.

The McCartney cabins were the only lodgings in the Park until the early 1880s, when George Marshall and John Goff opened their hotel at Lower Geyser Basin on the Firehole River near the mouth of Nez Percé Creek. Marshall and Goff were bought out in 1885 and the hotel was renamed the Firehole. But Marshall constructed another hotel nearby in 1884. McCartney's relationship with Park officials deteriorated to such an extent that he left to settle in the Gardiner area and became its postmaster in 1880. He expected to be reimbursed for his real estate, however, and persisted in his claims until 1901, when he received three thousand dollars. William F. Yancy's Pleasant Valley Hotel, just west of Tower Falls, opened in 1884 to accommodate those on their way to Cooke City. The accommodations were simple but good enough for writer Owen Wister who stayed there.

Nathaniel Langford wrote two articles entitled "The Wonders of the Yellowstone" for *Scribner's Monthly*, illustrated by Thomas



Yancy's Pleasant Valley Hotel opened in 1884. Yellowstone National Park Heritage and Research Center

Moran; evidently, the editors now felt the Yellowstone area was not a myth. In general, Langford described mountains, waterfalls, geysers, and boiling cauldrons. He did thrill his readers, however, with an account of one in the party, "unconcernedly passing near the brink, the incrustation suddenly sloughed off beneath his feet. A shout of alarm from his comrades aroused him to a sense of his peril, and he only avoided being plunged into the boiling mixture by falling suddenly backward at full length upon the firm portion of the crust, and rolling over to a place of safety." [24]

At the end of the second article, Langford states,

> *By means of the Northern Pacific Railroad, which will doubtless be completed within the next three years, the traveler will be able to make the trip to Montana from the Atlantic seaboard in three days, and thousands of tourists will be attracted to both Montana and Wyoming in order to behold with their own eyes the wonders here described.*[25]

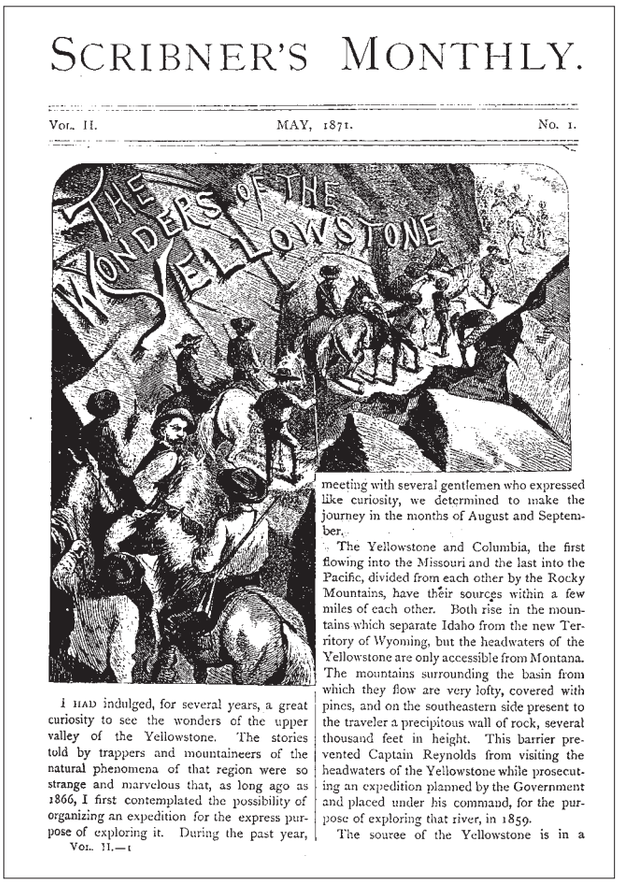
Three months later, the journal also published Truman Everts' account of his perilous adventures.

With Jay Cooke's encouragement, Langford planned to give some twenty speeches in the East; in fact, he made two – one in Washington, D. C. on January 19, 1871, and one two days later in New York. Months later, in the last days of May, Langford gave a speech of sorts at Jay Cooke's Ogontz estate. Continuing ill health prevented his completing his lecture tour. Nathaniel Langford also published in 1873 his account of *The Ascent of Mount Hayden, Grand Teton*, 1872.[26] Artist Thomas Moran illustrated the piece. For some years, Langford's account was discounted as not being accurate – it was alleged he did not climb the mountain at all – but it has been acknowledged in later times that his climbing companion, Colonel James Stevenson, was most reliable and verified

[24] Nathaniel Pitt Langford, "The Wonders of the Yellowstone," *Scribner's Monthly*, v. 2, n. 1 (May 1871): 15

[25] Nathaniel Pitt Langford, "The Wonders of the Yellowstone," *Scribner's Monthly*, v. 2, n. 2 (June 1871): 128

[26] Nathaniel Pitt Langford, "The Ascent of Mount Hayden, Grand Teton," *Scribner's Monthly*, June 1873



SCRIBNER'S MONTHLY.

VOL. II. MAY, 1871. No. 1.

THE WONDERS OF THE YELLOWSTONE

I HAD indulged, for several years, a great curiosity to see the wonders of the upper valley of the Yellowstone. The stories told by trappers and mountaineers of the natural phenomena of that region were so strange and marvelous that, as long ago as 1866, I first contemplated the possibility of organizing an expedition for the express purpose of exploring it. During the past year, meeting with several gentlemen who expressed like curiosity, we determined to make the journey in the months of August and September.

The Yellowstone and Columbia, the first flowing into the Missouri and the last into the Pacific, divided from each other by the Rocky Mountains, have their sources within a few miles of each other. Both rise in the mountains which separate Idaho from the new Territory of Wyoming, but the headwaters of the Yellowstone are only accessible from Montana. The mountains surrounding the basin from which they flow are very lofty, covered with pines, and on the southeastern side present to the traveler a precipitous wall of rock, several thousand feet in height. This barrier prevented Captain Reynolds from visiting the headwaters of the Yellowstone while prosecuting an expedition planned by the Government and placed under his command, for the purpose of exploring that river, in 1859.

The source of the Yellowstone is in a

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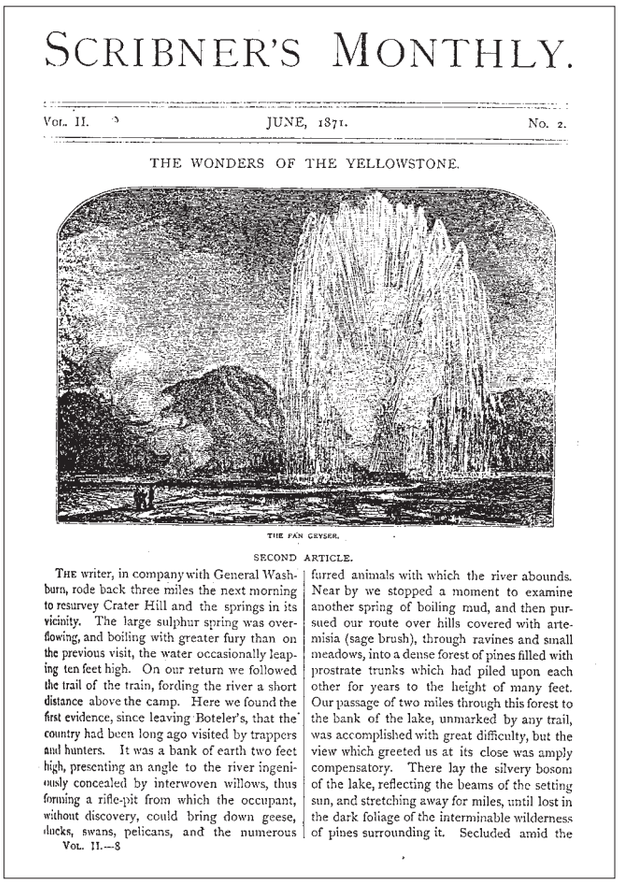

SCRIBNER'S MONTHLY.

VOL. II. JUNE, 1871. No. 2.

THE WONDERS OF THE YELLOWSTONE.

THE FAN GEYSER.

SECOND ARTICLE.

THE writer, in company with General Washburn, rode back three miles the next morning to resurvey Crater Hill and the springs in its vicinity. The large sulphur spring was overflowing, and boiling with greater fury than on the previous visit, the water occasionally leaping ten feet high. On our return we followed the trail of the train, fording the river a short distance above the camp. Here we found the first evidence, since leaving Boteler's, that the country had been long ago visited by trappers and hunters. It was a bank of earth two feet high, presenting an angle to the river ingeniously concealed by interwoven willows, thus forming a rifle-pit from which the occupant, without discovery, could bring down geese, ducks, swans, pelicans, and the numerous furred animals with which the river abounds. Near by we stopped a moment to examine another spring of boiling mud, and then pursued our route over hills covered with artemisia (sage brush), through ravines and small meadows, into a dense forest of pines filled with prostrate trunks which had piled upon each other for years to the height of many feet. Our passage of two miles through this forest to the bank of the lake, unmarked by any trail, was accomplished with great difficulty, but the view which greeted us at its close was amply compensatory. There lay the silvery bosom of the lake, reflecting the beams of the setting sun, and stretching away for miles, until lost in the dark foliage of the interminable wilderness of pines surrounding it. Secluded amid the

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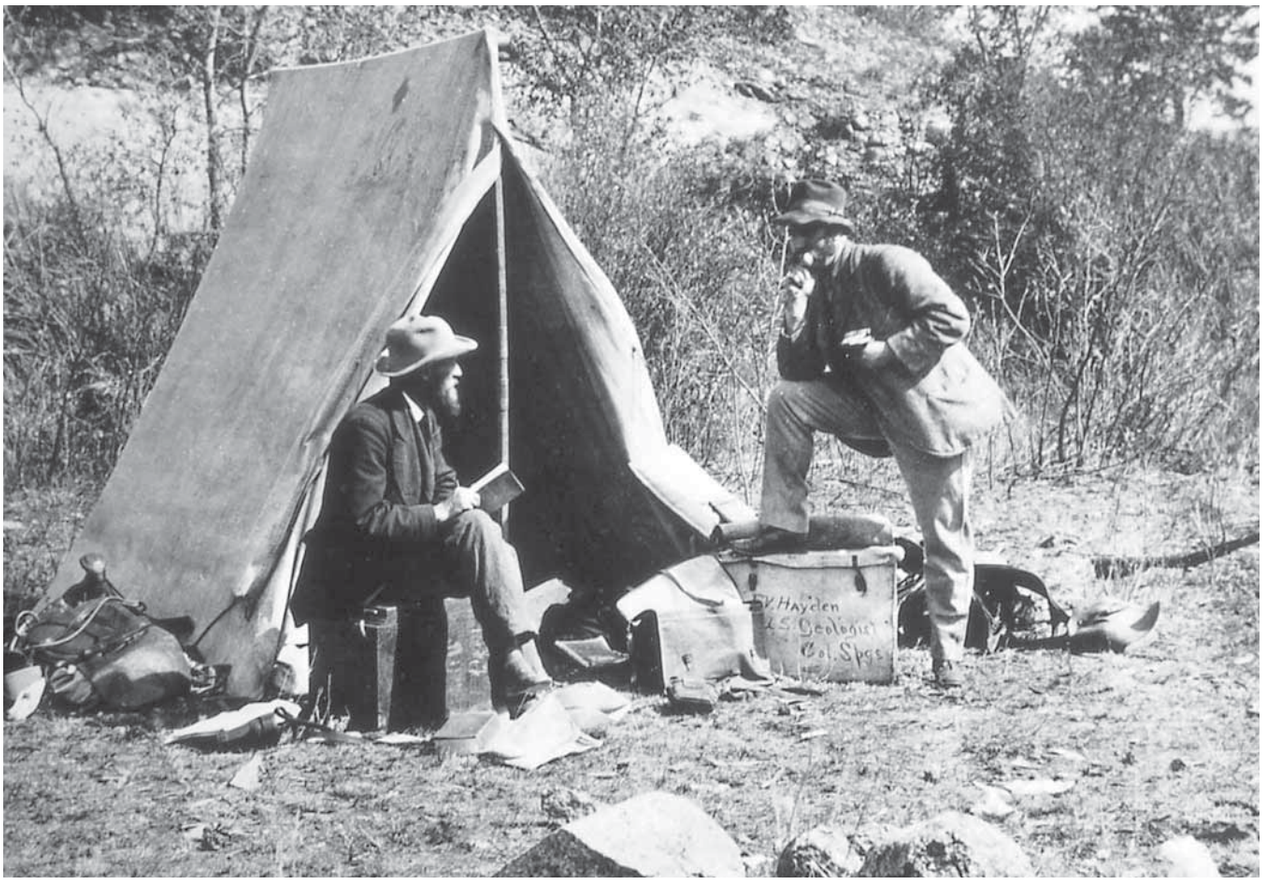
Drawings by Thomas Moran. SCRIBNER'S MONTHLY, VOLUME II, NUMBERS 1 AND 2, MAY AND JUNE 1871

that both climbed to the top.

Meanwhile, geologist Ferdinand Vandeveer Hayden heard Langford's Washington speech and planned two expeditions to the Yellowstone area, scheduled for 1871 and 1872. The geologist assembled his first exploration group in Utah. There were to be thirty-four members, eighteen packers, as well as cooks and guides. Albert C. Peale was chief geologist. Hayden was happy to have celebrated artist Thomas Moran on the trip to portray the Yellowstone landscape for the folks back east. Banker Jay Cooke's office manager A. B. Nettleton gave five hundred dollars to help with Moran's expenses and helped with other costs as well. *Scribner's* donated another five hundred to the artist. Moran managed to keep on a horse although he had never ridden one before. He made sketches of those scenes he wished to paint, but he did the actual painting when he returned home to Philadelphia. Henry Wood Elliott was also with the



Hayden talking to a member of the survey party. Yellowstone National Park Heritage and Research Center

Hayden on horseback. Yellowstone National Park Heritage and Research Center

expedition as an artist. William Henry Jackson was chief photographer on the expedition; Joshua C. Crissman also took a number of images. In early July, the group left Utah and traveled north to the Madison River, which they crossed on July 7.

On orders of General Philip Sheridan, a group of Army Corps of Engineers, under Captains John W. Barlow and David P. Heap, traveled along with the Hayden party. Photographer Thomas J. Hines traveled with the engineers and may have been the first to capture Old Faithful geyser on film.[27]

The photographs and Moran's watercolors, as well as Langford's *Scribner's* articles, were made available to the United States Congress to suggest the creation of a national park. On December 18, 1871, Samuel Clark Pomeroy of Kansas introduced Senate Bill 392 and William H.

[27] Alas, most of Hines' photos were destroyed in the Chicago Fire of 1889.

Some of the members of the Hayden Survey. Yellowstone National Park Heritage and Research Center

Clagett of Montana Territory introduced House Bill 764. Each lawmaker received photos by William Henry Jackson and other materials relating to the Yellowstone area. The usually slow-moving Congress speeded up to vote on the matter and the 2.2 million acres, or 3,472 square miles, of Yellowstone National Park became a reality under the review of the Department of the Interior. Two months later, on March 1, 1872, President Ulysses S. Grant signed the Act of Dedication, as the legislation was called:

> *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the tract of land in the Territories of Montana and Wyoming, lying near the headwaters of the Yellowstone river…is hereby reserved and withdrawn from settlement, occupancy, or sale under the laws of the United States, and dedicated and set apart as a public park or pleasuring ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people.*[28]

[28] U. S. Code, Title l6, Chapter 1, Subchapter 5.

On May 8, President Grant named Nathaniel P. Langford Superintendent of Yellowstone National Park. He was not the first to be nominated for the position of Superintendent. Truman Everts turned down the post, perhaps with good reason. There was no salary offered, nor was any money set aside for maintenance. Langford now called himself "National Park" Langford, but perhaps he should have been called "Northern Pacific" Langford.

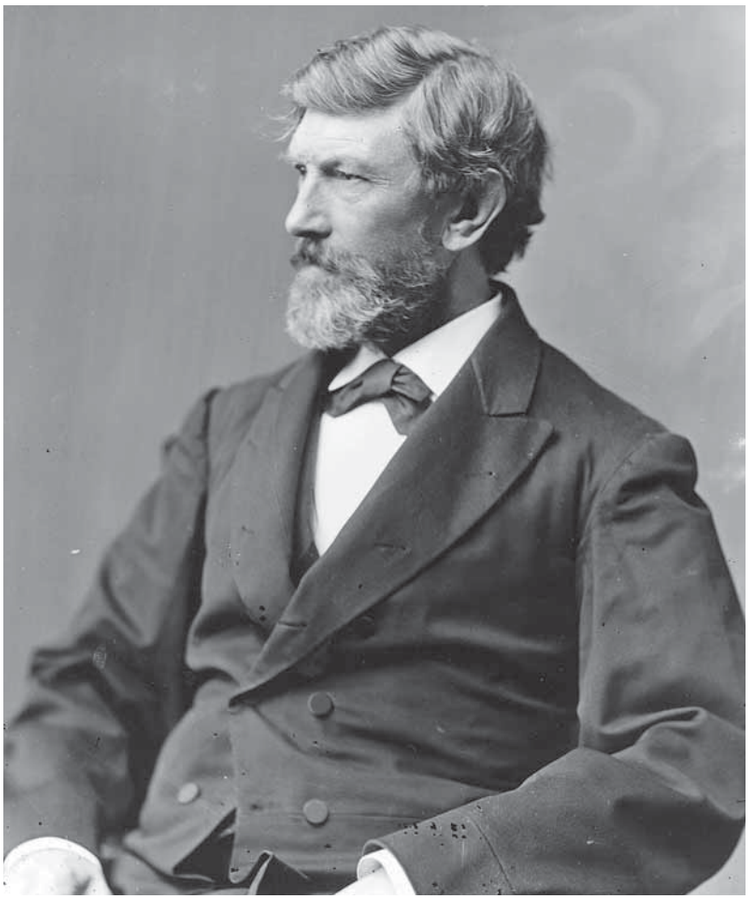
During Langford's term of office, little changed regarding problems with violations of Park management. A wrongdoer was not apprehended or prosecuted. As writer Richard A. Bartlett observes:

> *Tourists carried wagonloads of sinter (calcium deposits) from the geysers, threw everything from handkerchiefs to tree stumps into the thermal springs, set the woods on fire with their untended campfires, and along with poachers, slaughtered the wildlife and caught fish by the thousands. Yellowstone became*

a sort of reservation for the pleasures of despoilment.[29]

In later years, any number of visitors to the region, including some members of the early expeditions, suggested that it was their idea that a park be formed. Charles Cook said it was his idea, as did Nathaniel Langford, Cornelius Hedges, and Acting Governor Thomas Francis Meagher as well. Ferdinand V. Hayden irritated a number of park enthusiasts when he wrote in 1878 that the idea of a park was his solely. Thirty-five years later, Nathaniel Langford did describe a congenial meeting around a campfire at the conclusion of the 1871 excursion where the possibility of a park was discussed. The men at the campfire concluded that the area should be reserved as a national park. Langford gave three speeches the East shortly after the Expedition but did not mention a campfire meeting. After he returned to Helena, Cornelius Hedges wrote a number of articles for local papers but did not mention a campfire discussion in his writing. Warren Gillette kept a diary of the trek but did not mention a campfire talk.[30] Ferdinand Hayden did not mention the park idea in his reports to Washington.

There is no article, diary, or newspaper item, however, written before the Park became a reality, that mentions a campfire consultation or other meetings where such an idea was discussed. A number of people decided, some years later, that they had stated publicly that the Yellowstone area should be a national park, whether in a speech or to a group sitting around a campfire. Some of these explorers got quite upset when it was suggested that it was an afterthought. Perhaps historian Louis C. Cramton was correct when he stated, "It is to be regretted that in a field where there would seem to be glory enough for all, the claims to credit should be so conflicting."[31] The writer Wallace Stegner avoided the whole problem in later years enthusiastically stating that Yellowstone National Park "is the best idea America ever had."



William Darrah "Pig Iron" Kelley has an idea. Yellowstone National Park Heritage and Research Center

One letter to Ferdinand Hayden, dated October 27, 1871, from A. B. Nettleton, Jay Cooke's office manager, does suggest that at least one person was thinking of a possible park: Northern Pacific Railroad investor and Congressman Willliam Darrah "Pig Iron" Kelley of Philadelphia:

Dear Doctor: Judge Kelley has made a suggestion which strikes me as being an excellent one, viz: Let Congress pass a bill reserving the Great Geyser Basin as a public park forever–just as it has reserved that far inferior wonder the Yosemite valley and big trees. If you approve this would such a recommendation be appropriate in your official report?[32]

[29] Richard A. Bartlett, "Will Anyone Come Here for Pleasure?" *American West*, volume 6, number 5 (September 1969): 11

[30] Gillette's editor, Brian Cockhill, mentioned the campfire in 1972.

[31] Louis C. Cramton, *Early History of Yellowstone National Park and its Relation to National Park Policies*, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1932: 28

[32] A. B. Nettleton to F. V. Hayden, 27 October 1871, Record Group 57, Records of the Department of the Interior, Geological Survey, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D. C.

Meanwhile, officers of the Northern Pacific Railroad had not been idle. Jay Cooke signed an agreement to fund construction on January 1, 1870. On February 15, building of the road began near Carlton, Minnesota, at the western tip of Lake Superior, twenty-three miles from Duluth, moving across Minnesota to Brainerd and then to Dakota Territory toward Bismarck. With a branch line from Brainerd to the twin cities, the Northern Pacific could now count on freight from both the Great Lakes and Minneapolis-St. Paul. The sections of track were laid in swampy lands; heavy with pine, oak, and elm trees. Some of the track had to be re-laid due to the marshy conditions. Farther west, however, the line crossed through prairie lands that were relatively easy to negotiate. The winter of 1872 was a bitter one, with temperatures as low as 30 degrees below zero and with heavy snows. Despite the weather, tracks were laid to Bismarck by June 3, 1873.

The Northern Pacific Railroad had gotten to Bismarck. By March 1871, the Northern Pacific had completed twenty-five miles of track from Kalmia, Washington Territory, heading east. Some two thousand Chinese workers from San Francisco were hired at two dollars per day to lay the tracks. When completed, the line would be more than 1800 miles in length.

On September 18, 1873, however, work on the Northern Pacific was suddenly stopped. Just before eleven o'clock that morning in the Wall Street branch of Jay Cooke and Associates, customers in the middle of their transactions were ushered out and the massive bronze doors closed. A number of other banks in the East in which Cooke was a principal closed as well. Financial problems spread to other banks and industries. The Panic of 1873 had begun. The Northern Pacific would lay no more tracks past Bismarck for the next six years.